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April 2019 - Clipper Pioneers Newsletter

Vol 54-4 - Page 1

International Intrigue Puts Pan Am in the Middle

by Captain Robert Lee Bragg edited by Dorothy A. Boyd-Bragg, Ph.D.

During the early 1970s, Pan Am was interested in selling all their B-707s at give away prices. They were looking forward to acquiring the L-1011 and/or the B-747. In the process, Pan Am encountered Robert L. Vesco, one of the truly "great" con-men of all time, who was then CEO of International Controls Corporate (ICC). Did he ever get a deal from Pan Am!

Without having a gun at their back, Pan Am sold Vesco a B-707 for next to nothing. Vesco had initially intended to try to get a B-720 from American Airlines – which, simply put, was a short B-707. But, he quickly changed his mind after realizing that he could take Pan Am to the cleaners very easily - as he had already done to so many others during the course of his checkered financial career. My role in all this was that I met one of ICC's directors on a B-707 flight, talked to him, and ultimately recommended that ICC consider the B-707 rather than the B-720. Undoubtedly, he carried the word back along with my recommendation.

Vesco flew the B-707 he'd purchased from Pan Am to Geneva, Switzerland, immediately after the deal was completed to meet with Bernard "Bernie" Cornfeld, CEO of Investors Overseas Services (IOS), another of the scam artists written up at some length by the likes of Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. On his first trip to Geneva, Vesco was apparently already interested in taking over IOS from Cornfeld, which then had about 400 million dollars in assets. Cornfeld, on this occasion, was certainly no match for the likes of Vesco. Wish I really knew more about the skulduggery involved.

Vesco purchased IOS from Cornfeld for approximately five million dollars. The deal was even more one-sided than the earlier purchase from Pan Am. Vesco in the end made the deal even sweeter for himself by failing to pay either Pan Am or Cornfeld the full purchase price. As anyone interested in the history of crooked finance knows, Cornfeld was soon ousted from IOS and Vesco flew his B-707 back and forth the

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No Password Needed for Members Only Section of the Website

Please note - we have changed the access to the online newsletters so that you will no longer need a password to access them. GO TO OUR WEBSITE AT: www.clipperpioneers.com. To request a current membership list, email sue@clipperpioneers.com with your request. Click on the "Members Only" button on the righthand side to access the current and previous newsletters.

International Intrigue Puts Pan Am in the Middle

~ continued on from previous page

across the Atlantic with great regularity. It is my understanding that he wanted the B-707 mainly to fly to Geneva to bring money back in the years he was with ICC - not that he didn't also fly elsewhere as well.

Unfortunately for Vesco, he made one of his pilots extremely angry by failing to pay him back wages. The pilot, A.L. Eisenhauer, ultimately flew the plane from Panama to Mexico City to New York where it was repossessed by Pan Am, who had only received a minimal deposit for the plane. Pan Am got their money for the B-707 in the end, but they also foolishly purchased not one or more B-747s but a veritable fleet of twenty-five. Eisenhauer got his revenge and wrote a book about his years flying for Vesco. It was aptly called *The Flying Carpetbagger*.

In the end, both Cornfeld and Vesco shared remarkably similar fates. Cornfeld faced jail and aimless wandering in the years before his death in London in 1995. Vesco, although he prospered for a time, also ultimately faced prison and exile before his "probable" death in Cuba in 2007. In a sense, both men essentially ended their days as wanderers.

If you look in Robert Vesco's dealings in the years after he dickered with Pan Am, it sort of makes you think that Vesco was just "practicing" when he was negotiating with Pan Am. His success certainly did not help the financial situation at Pan Am and likely contributed to its initial decline. At the very least, both Vesco and Cornfeld were interesting characters, and, if you really look at the pair, they make Bernie Madoff look like he was just following in their footsteps.

Some More Memories of Pan Am

By Bill Kelly

On April 11th, 1970, I was the first officer going from Montego Bay to JFK. Flight control has us overheading Orlando instead of the over water route that was planned. It's early afternoon and our diversion will help clear air space for Apollo 13's launch. Northbound I have the view and the Passenger PA. Timing was perfect. Lift off and a few minutes of exhaust smoke was exciting to see from some 30 thousand feet. I remember hearing some applause from the back. It was quite a show. Unfortunately there would be no moon landing for the three astronauts. It was lucky they got back.

Another memory:

On a Rock Sound - Nassau - JFK trip again we go inland and I'm describing a launch that had been mentioned in the papers. On board is Mr. Trippe and he must have been asleep during my announcement, because a short while later, a flight attendant comes in to say that Mr. Trippe wonders when the launch will be. Sound sleeper he, I guess!

The last print issue of this newsletter was scheduled for Dec. 2018. However, because of quite a few requests to keep the newsletter going as a print edition, it has been decided to continue with it until the funds run dry, while leaving sufficient funds to keep the website going for awhile. **We've heard from several of you that you'd like to see the newsletter keep going, so there's a poll about that on the back page. Please take time to read and respond to it.**

We'd like to have more stories to share! If you have a story you'd like to send, please send it in sooner rather than later! Email to: sue@clipperpioneers.com.

Don't forget to check out our website at: www.clipperpioneers.com

More Memories: Third grade science lessons.

By Robert Kloepper

Lesson one: The world is round.

Flying from JFK to NRT the purser was in the cockpit for a short stop. She said that she can't take these 13 time change trips. I said I can't either, but it's actually only 11 hours time change. She became very argumentative and said that she did them all the time and it is 13, period. I said if you fly from EWR to ORD, is that a 1 hour time change or a 23 hour time change? She slammed the door on the way out of the cockpit.

Same flight different day. Flight attendant comes into the cockpit and asks what are you doing? I respond that I am watching a beautiful sunset. She replied that the sun couldn't be setting because we arrive in NRT in the middle of the afternoon. I started to explain declination and latitude, etc. I was just getting to the astrological sphere and she turned and left the cockpit.

Lesson two. Some lines on a globe are imaginary.

Flying from JFK to RIO overnight. The Captain was well known for making very interesting and funny announcements. He said that we were going to cross the equator in about six hours and that since this was the first Saturday of the month, the lights will be on. We flew on and on. In the middle of the night, four flight attendants came into the cockpit. They just stood there. Finally I asked "what's up"? They said that they came to see the equator. I said to the Captain "Jerry, you have visitors to see you."

Lesson three. You can change the time on your watch.

After the National merger, I was on several flights from LHR to MIA to LHR with flight attendants that were from National. While in LHR, I asked why the pickup time was so early. The clerk said that the National girls worked on Miami time. What? Then to top it off, they didn't go in the regular PanAm log book. They had their own time sheets in Miami time. I asked one of them about this and was told that didn't need any time zone baloney. I don't know how they handled EST to EDT to EST when required.

Lesson four. There is a green flash.

Flying with a Captain on his last pattern from NRT to HNL etc., he said that he thought the "green flash" was just a legend. He had been sailing for 35 years and flying for 35 years and had never seen it. I said that I had seen it and that maybe would see it on this flight. Sure enough, at sunrise there it was for a split second. He was jubilant. His wife was down in first class and he went down to tell her what he had seen. When he came back, I told him that it was an omen that he was going to have a long happy, and healthy retirement.

Pan Am Historical Society has a Facebook page. You can view it here:
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pan-Am-Historical-Foundation/226994925218>

You are a part of this wonderful Pan Am "family". Are there memories you've written down that you'd like to share with us in this newsletter? We've gotten some great response, and there will continue to be interesting stories coming up in 2019 Please share yours with us, as well! Please send them to Sue by email to: sue@clipperpioneers.com.

A photographic memory

By Robert Kloepper

During the fifties, I spent a lot of time in Frankfurt, Germany while I was in the USAF. When I was hired by PanAm in the middle sixties, I once again was in FRA quite often.

I knew a lot of good restaurants, but my favorite was always Baseler Eck. In the early days I was the only crew member in there. It hadn't been discovered yet. Gerd was very young and was tentative with his English. I spoke what we used to call "schotzi deutsch" and we got along fine. He used to call me Ami (ah-me).

One of the things that fascinated me was that Gerd never wrote anything down. He just remembered what the order was. He never got orders mixed up. He sometimes put a mark on a beer coaster to keep tabs on drinks.

We were not big buddies, let me say, just business. After PAC day in the eighties, I became a Pacific specialist and didn't go to FRA again.

Years later after I had retired, I was in FRA on a personal matter. I went to Baseler Eck in the middle of the afternoon. Gerd was standing by that little bar to the left and there were 3 or 4 locals seated. He is older and I am older, no way will he know me. After a few minutes he walked over and put a bottle of schnapps and two small glasses on the table and said "Ami, where the f**k have you been for the last few years"?

I answered, "Gerhard, ihr English ist ausgezeichnet"! We went on from there.

Writing by hand keeps your brain sharp as you get older

Writing longhand is a workout. No, not necessarily for your wrist, but for your brain. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, some physicians claim that the act of writing — which engages your motor-skills, memory, and more — is good cognitive exercise for baby boomers who want to keep their minds sharp as they age.

And if you're looking to pick up a new skill, a 2008 study published in the *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* found that adults had an easier time recognizing new characters — like Chinese, math symbols, or music notes — that were written by hand over characters generated by a computer.

(excerpt from <http://mentalfloss.com/article/33508/4-benefits-writing-hand>)

A new website has been created for Lockerbie. It can be viewed at www.lockerbie103.com.

Members might be interested in a new book just released: "PAN AM AT WAR...HOW THE AIRLINE SECRETLY HELPED AMERICA FIGHT WORLD WAR II" by Mark Cotta Vaz and John H. Hill.

~George Rogers

Please update your email address and phone number if it's been changed!
Email or write to Sue Forde, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim WA 98382
or email to: jerryholmes747@gmail.com or sue@clipperpioneers.com

Please respond to the poll on page 8 to offer your thoughts about continuing this newsletter.

PAN AM REUNION CRUISE

APRIL 27, 2019

TAMPA TO BARCELONA

Dear Pan Amers:

Once again we prepare for our next and much welcomed Pan Am reunion cruise.

We are honoring the many requests to repeat a Transatlantic cruise with lots of wonderful and interesting ports of call. Our 14 day cruise, departs Tampa to Barcelona starting off with seven relaxing days at sea. Melt away land-based stress with a spa massage, build a scrapbook of memories or simply relax poolside. Plenty of time to reach out to old friends, enjoy movies and lots more. Expect a great time!

Embarking on an oceangoing adventure like this will be no doubt one of the most exciting moments of any traveler's life. The old saying that it's as much about the journey as the destination has never been truer. Adventures await you at each port, shopping, exploring famous attractions or sipping a cool drink in a romantic café. So, welcome aboard, I know this cruise will provide a lifetime of memories to cherish. Family and friends are most welcomed.

Rates: per person, double occupancy, cruise only, based on availability and subject to change. Singles pay 200%. Port charges and government taxes additional \$330.39 per person plus a registration fee (to help with amenities, cocktail parties and such) at \$125. per person. Call to reserve now; a deposit of \$450 per person will lock in the current price. All major credit cards are accepted but checks are preferred. Insurance is highly suggested and cost is based on category type cabin. More information with your invoice.

ITINERARY:

Sat	27 Apr 2019	Tampa, Florida	5:00 PM	Boarding	
Sun	28 Apr 2019	Key West, Florida	11:00 AM	6:00 PM	Docked
Mon	29 Apr 2019	thru 05 May 2019	Cruising	-	Cruising
Mon	06 May 2019	La Palma, Canary Islands	1:00 PM	9:00 PM	Docked
Tue	07 May 2019	Tenerife, Canary Islands	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	Docked
Wed	08 May 2019	Cruising	-	-	Cruising
Thu	09 May 2019	Malaga, Spain	12:00 PM	9:30 PM	Docked
Fri	10 May 2019	Cruising	-	-	Cruising
Sat	11 May 2019	Barcelona, Spain	6:00 AM	-	Debark

\$789 (Inside) _ \$929 (Outside) \$1698 (Balcony) \$2539 (Jr. Suite)

To reserve call INTERLINE TRAVELS 1-888-592-7245 (TOLL FREE) or Carmen's direct mobile phone 786-252-7838. For questions on cruise call Stu Archer (Pan Am pilot and cruise director) at 305-238-0911. Carmen 786-252-7838 INTERLINETRAVELS@YAHOO.COM

Pan Am Philadelphia Area Pilots (PAPAP)

We meet the second Tuesday of every quarter at the Continental Inn in Yardley, PA at 1200 for a bit of BS before going to our private conference room upstairs for lunch.

Been going on since 1992 and it's a great way to stay together. Contact: Chris Blaydon [215 757 6229](tel:2157576229) or cblayd@aol.com

Come Join the Santa Rosa Breakfast Group!

The Santa Rosa Breakfast group meets about every six weeks. They have 17 pilots, FA's and FEO's that get together to discuss the old days. Anyone in the Sonoma, Napa, and Marin county areas north of San Francisco who would like to join them should email Dave Criley at davecriley@comcast.net, and send your email contact. They started out with 5 and have grown to 17. ~from Dave Criley

Flying Boat Reunion clip now available for viewing

A 15-minute special that aired April 27, 2016 on Ireland's popular RTE TV show "Nationwide" is now available for viewing. China Clipper First Officer Robert Hicks (94); Merry Barton, daughter of Folger Athearn (Pan Am's station manager in Noumea, New Caledonia in 1941); Director of the Foynes Flying Boat Museum Margaret O'Shaughnessy; Ed Trippe and Mary Lou Bigelow were interviewed during the Foynes Flying Boat reunion. <http://www.rte.ie/player/us/show/nationwide-21/10566026/>

Layovers for Pan Am

Check out Pan American layovers at www.paacrewlayover.com, where some 81 cities and over 161 hotels are shown in photos.

Check Out the Lockerbie Website

A website has been created for Lockerbie. It can be viewed at www.lockerbie103.com. It might be a worthwhile site to check out, especially for those who plan on visiting Lockerbie. Be sure to enter the web address in the browser (not Google Search, etc.) with the www. Otherwise, they will get hundreds of Lockerbies and 103s and may not find the web site after 15 pages. ~Claude Hudspeth

Pan Am -- Personal Tributes to A Global Aviation Pioneer

The Pan Am Historical Foundation recently published the highly acclaimed *Pan Am – Personal Tributes to a Global Aviation Pioneer*, a book that caught the attention of Pan Amers and aviation enthusiasts around the world. Visit <https://www.panam.org/shop/669-panam90-book> to order.

Thank You for the Stories You're Sending In! Keep 'em coming!!

We've been getting some good stories about memories of your times with Pan Am, and we want you to know we appreciate it! Keep them coming, and you will see them in the upcoming issues! Are there memories you've written down that you'd like to share with us in this newsletter - short or long? Have you come across an interesting article that you'd like to share with us? Would you share pieces from a book you've written? Send them to sue@clipperpioneers.com or jerryholmes747@gmail.com

*...and God will lift you up on Eagle's Wings, bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun and hold you in the palm of His hand.*

IN MEMORIAM

Elbert "Al" Baker passed away on March 1, 2019 at 97. After attending the University of Colorado in aeronautical engineering, he was recruited by Pan American, beginning as a navigator on the "flying boat" in the South Pacific. After retiring in 1982 as a 747 captain and check airman in SFO, he persuaded his partner (Pan Am flight attendant Sharon May) to accompany him on his sailboat, Kealoha, on a 3-year cruise from San Francisco through the Panama Canal, and into the Caribbean.

Captain James E "Jimmy" Dodd 1925 to 2019. Jim Dodd was born on February 9, 1925 in Rural, South Georgia. In 1927 he moved to Oklahoma & raised by his Grand Parents. In 1955- 1987, he flew with Pan American Airlines. In 1987 Jim Dodd retired as a Pan Am Captain on a 747 airliner. Jim enjoyed living his remaining days with the "Love of His Life". Jim went to be with Our LORD Jesus Christ at the age of 94 on February 28, 2019. He was extremely respected & will be missed by those fortunate enough to know him.

Albert Benton (Benny) Leatherwood passed away Sunday 3 February 2019 with his wife Janice and family by his side at his home in Sunnyvale, CA. Benny was based in SFO, NY, Sidney and lastly LA.

Francis "Hank" X. Colbert, 95, passed away peacefully at home on Feb. 14, 2019. He was born in Somerville, Mass., and lived in Madison, N.J., for the past 48 years. He was a retired airline captain for Pan Am, and Navy commander in WWII. He graduated from Boston College in 1950 with a degree in Industrial Management. He worked for Pan American Airlines as an airline pilot captain for 32 years until his retirement in 1983.

William Lewis Kliefoth was born in Endicott, New York on November 24, 1923 to William Edward Kliefoth and Margaret Lewis Kliefoth. He was married to his loving wife Vera Tomlinson Kliefoth for 48 years before she preceded him in death. Bill died on Wednesday, February 13, 2019 at the age of 95. His 32-year Pan Am career took him to over 110 countries and countless cities, flying planes such as the luxurious Boeing Stratocruiser, Boeing 707 and iconic Boeing 747. Celebrity passengers included Charles Lindbergh, Charlton Heston, Robert F. Kennedy, Paul McCartney, Walter Cronkite and others.

Gaylore Rhodes Stearns, a former Pan Am Clipper pilot and native Californian, , passed away on Saturday, February 9, 2019 at age 105, at his home in north Fresno. Gaylore was born in the Boyle Heights area of Los Angeles, California on July 6, 1913, to Harry and Rhoda Stearns. He was recruited in the 1930s by Pan American World Airways to join the small corps of elite pilots who flew the legendary Pan American Clipper Ship, one of the largest aircraft of its time.

Louis Matthew Fielack Jr., 82, of Mammoth Spring, Arkansas, passed away peacefully on January 11, 2019. He was born on August 7, 1936 in New York. He was a pilot at Pan American World Airways, Delta Airlines and also the Dubai Royal Air Wing.

For more information and full obituaries about each of these friends who will be missed, click on "In Memory Of..." at our website: www.clipperpioneers.com. Know of someone from Pan Am who has passed? Email the obit to Jerry Holmes at jerryholmes747@gmail.com or sue@clipperpioneers.com, or mail to: Sue Forde, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim, WA 98382

Protect yourself against Medicare scams

Getting calls from people claiming to be from Medicare, asking for money or personal information: The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has prepared a video about how you can protect yourself from Medicare scams. You can see it here if you can watch videos on your computer: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2019/03/protect-yourself-against-medicare-scams/>.

The FTC worked with AARP to create a series of videos about imposter scams – including Medicare scams, IRS imposters and robocalls. This video helps you recognize the scammers who ask for your Medicare number so you can get a back or neck brace. Or who say they need your information or money so you can get a new Medicare card. Ways to avoid the scams include:

Hang up. If someone calls claiming to be from Medicare, asking for your Social Security number or bank information to get your new card or new benefits, that's a scam.

Don't give personal information to a caller claiming to be from Medicare. You can't trust caller id. These calls can be "spoofed" so they look like they're coming from Medicare even when they're not. Before you give any personal information, initiate your own call to Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE.

Report the call. Report Medicare imposters at 1-800-MEDICARE and [ftc.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint).

For more information about stopping imposter scams, visit [ftc.gov/imposters](https://www.ftc.gov/imposters). And to learn about how to stop unwanted calls, including using call blocking technology, go to [ftc.gov/calls](https://www.ftc.gov/calls).

Polling to see if you'd like to have the Clipper Pioneers newsletter continue

A number of subscribers have asked if this newsletter can continue past August 2019, when the funds run out for publishing, printing and mailing it.

So we thought we'd ask how many of our readers would like to have the Clipper Pioneers newsletter continue to be printed. Would you kindly let us know if you'd like to have it continue? (To do so would require a payment of another year's dues.)

Please respond - clip and mail this section, or email Jerry or Sue with your desire. Or, go to the www.clipperpioneers.com website, where there is the poll on the home page to let us know your response. Thanks!

☐ YES, I'd like to have the Clipper Pioneers newsletter continue. I'm willing to pay another year's dues at \$25.00. (Dues won't be requested until we know that enough of you want to continue.)

☐ NO, I think we should stop printing the newsletter as of the August 2019 issue, when the funds run out.

Your Name: _____ Date: _____

Mail to: Clipper Pioneers, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim, WA 98382.
or email to: jerryholmes747@gmail.com or sue@clipperpioneers.com
or fill out the poll at www.clipperpioneers.com